



December 3, 2004

Melissa Miller-Henson
Department of Fish and Game
California Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Comments on Proposed Table of Contents for Draft Master Plan Framework (Oct 23-23 meeting, Agenda Item #9B)

Dear Ms. Miller-Henson:

We want to commend you for a thorough and complete Table of Contents (BRTF Oct 23-24 meeting, Agenda Item #9B). The proposal is an excellent starting point.

Our comments relate to the public process needed for the expansion of the Table of Contents into a substantive document. Some items in the ToC will have greater influence on siting decisions than others, and thus are likely to need special attention in the public process for developing the full Master Plan Framework. Items in that category are, in our view, Section III. C.3., recommendations for improving the design guidelines (Section 2857 (c) of the MLPA); and possibly Sections III.C.1 and 2, recommendations for extent and types of habitats that should be represented in an MPA system and for what species are likely to benefit from MPAs. These are all issues that should, in our view, be prioritized for early attention from the Science Advisory Group. To the extent the Task Force staff will be prioritizing issues for research contracts, we hope these items receive early consideration, along with gathering relevant economic information, which is likely to take time. It will be important to get that underlying information in accessible form to interested parties as soon as possible.

As you know, the science relevant to site design issues has continued to evolve over the past few years. As members of the public, we would appreciate a public workshop or some other mechanism where experts could present the latest science and traditional knowledge relevant to site design guidelines, with opportunities for discussion. We think that approach would be useful both to develop a shared knowledge base among all involved parties, and to provide an opportunity for a dialogue among interested parties and scientists. There are various scientific groups that might be willing to help plan such workshops by identifying appropriate scientists or contributing in other ways.

Another item that may need special attention in the public process is Section II A, guidance for the application of legislative language on the goals of the Marine Life Protection Program. We encourage you to provide an opportunity for dialogue among interested parties on this item.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment, and we look forward to working with you and the BRTF on further development of the Master Plan Framework.

Sincerely,

Karen Garrison
NRDC

Erin Simmons
TOC

Cc: Phil Isenberg, Blue Ribbon Task Force Chair